

Our Wife

Comic Drama in two acts

By
S. M. Norton

1856

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF
WARWICK
LIBRARY

The Gift of
Mrs G. F. Hall



OUR WIFE;

OR, THE

ROSE OF AMIENS

A COMIC DRAMA

IN

TWO ACTS

BY

JOHN MADDISON MORTON.

AUTHOR OF

Friend Waggles—Three Cuckoos—My Precious Betsy—Where there's a will there's a way—John Dobbs—A most unwarrantable Intrusion—Going to the Derby—Your Life's in Danger—Midnight Watch—Box and Cox—Trumpeter's Wedding—Done on Both Sides—Poor Pillicoddy—Old Honesty—Young England—King and I—My Wife's Second Floor—Who do they take me for—Double Bedded Room—The Milliners' Holiday—Wedding Breakfast—Irish Tiger—Attic Story—Who's the Composer—Who's my Husband—Slasher and Crasher—Prince for an Hour—Away with Melancholy—Waiting for an Omnibus—Betsy Baker—Who stole the pocket-book—Two Bonnycastleles—From Village to Court—Grimshaw, Bagshaw, and Bradshaw—Rights and Wrongs of Women—Sent to the Tower—&c. &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

89, STRAND,

(Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market.)

LONDON.

OUR WIFE; OR, THE ROSE OF AMIENS.

*First performed at the Royal Princess's Theatre,
on Tuesday, November 18th, 1856,*

CHARACTERS.

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| MARQUIS DE LIGNY, (<i>Captain of the King's Guards</i>) - - - | MR. RYDER: |
| COUNT DE BRISSAC, (<i>his friend</i>) - - - | MR. DAVID FISHER. |
| POMARET - - - | MR. HARLEY. |
| DUMONT - - - | MR. RAYMOND. |
| FIRST OFFICER - - - | MR. TERRY. |
| SECOND OFFICER - - - | MR. COLLETT. |
| MESSENGER - - - | MR. DALY. |
| ROSINE, (<i>Pomaret's Daughter</i>) - - - | MISS CARLOTTA LECLERCQ. |
| MARIETTE, (<i>her cousin</i>) | MISS MURRAY. |
| SCENE—AMIENS. PERIOD—1634. | |

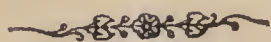
COSTUMES.

- DE LIGNY.—Buff cloth Charles II. jacket, scarlet and gold trimming; white gauntlets, crimson velvet breeches, yellow boots, black hat and white feather, red ribbon; steel neck piece, sword-belt and sword, ruffles.
- BRISSAC.—White cloth jacket, silver buttons, green and silver trimming; green velvet breeches, cream coloured boots, spurs, crimson and gold sword belt, sword, black hat, white feather, white ribbon, ruffles.
- POMARET.—Black full jacket, red facings; black breeches, blue stockings, black shoes and red tie; brown eurbed wig, drab hat, black feather.
- DUMONT.—Brown jacket, black breeches, black boots, sword, black hat.
- OFFICERS.—Blue velvet jackets, breeches, black boots, hats, feathers, swords.
- GUESTS.—Various coloured.
- MESSENGER.—Dark drab velvet jacket and breeches, trimmed with black, black hat and boots.
- ROSINE.—Pink silk tabbed jacket and skirt, blue trimming; pink hat and blue trimming, shoes. *Second Dress*, White silk, trimmed with blue.
- MARRIETTE.—Blue silk, cherry coloured trimming, blue hat and cherry trimming. *Second Dress*, White silk, cherry trimming, shoes.
- GUESTS.—Various coloured.

OUR WIFE ;

OR, THE

ROSE OF AMIENS.



ACT I.

SCENE.—*The Interior of Pomaret's Shop, very handsomely fitted up. A counter at L. H. of the stage, on which are silks, ribbons, gloves, perfumes, &c., &c. Door, c.—window each side of door, showing the street beyond. Doors, R. H. 1 E. and R. H. 2 E.—door, L. H. 2 E.—a violin hanging near door in c.*

At the rising of the curtain, several of the King's Musketeers, in the brilliant costume of the period, enter c. The MUSKETEERS striking on the counter.

1ST MUSK. Shop!—Shop!—Shop!—I say!

MUSKETEERS. Yes. Shop!—Shop!—Shop!

Enter MARIETTE, hurriedly, at door R. H.

MARI. Dear—dear! what a clatter to be sure. (*aside.*) King's Musketeers, I do declare! They're the best customers we have. (*running up c.*) Now, noble cavaliers, what can I serve you with? Gloves—silks—ribbons—laces—perfumes? You've only to ask for what you want, pay the money, and there it is. (*to 1st MUSKETEER.*) What may you require, sir?

1ST MUSK. (L. H.) The fair Rosine.

MARI. Oh! (to 2ND MUSKETEER.) What for you, sir?

2ND MUSK. (R. H.) The fair Rosine.

MARI. (*aside.*) Rosine! the article is evidently in great request. (*aloud.*) But my cousin—"the fair Rosine," as you call her—isn't up yet. (*goes to the back of counter.*)

1ST MUSK. Then I'll wait till she is.

MUSKETEERS. Ay, ay! we'll wait till she is.

(*the MUSKETEERS separate and seat themselves.*)

MARI. As long as my cousin Rosine chooses to serve in the shop, I shouldn't sell a pair of gloves or a yard of ribbon in a month. I pity their taste!

(*a trumpet sounds without.*)

1ST MUSK. Hark! there must be news astir to call us to horse at this early hour.

2ND MUSK. It is reported that the Cardinal de Richelieu is about to take command of the troops, and compel the Spaniards to raise the seige.

1ST MUSK. Well, we must away. (*to MARIETTE.*) We shall soon return; but, remember, though our purses are well filled, not one single livre will find its way into Master Pomaret's pocket, unless his pretty daughter, the Rose of Amiens, is here to serve us. *Exeunt MUSKETEERS, C.*

POMARET. (R.—*without.*) Don't tell me! The shop's full of customers! I'm sure it is—I *feel* it is! Where's my wig? I can't find my wig! It's all right—I've got it!

He enters door R. H. U. E., hurriedly putting on his coat.

MARI. You've found your wig I see, uncle?

POM. Yes; and where d'ye think it was? You'll never guess. On my head! It's a positive fact—my wig was on my head! (*crosses L. H.*)

MARI. (*with pretended astonishment.*) You don't say so?

POM. 'Pon my life I'm serious. Such a very out-of-the-way place for a man's wig to be, isn't it? But we've had customers here—eh, Mariette?

MARI. Yes, uncle—a whole regiment of the King's Musketeers.

POM. Noble fellows! they draw their purse-strings as freely as they draw their swords.

MARI. (R.) Yes, but when the sword's out the scabbard's empty—purses ditto.

POM. Holloa! Mariette! Mariette! holloa! This is my shop, not yours—my business, not yours. Be good enough to remember you're my uncle—I mean that I'm your niece. Well, and what was the article most in request this morning with the gallant Musketeers?

MARI. (*sulkily*.) One that I couldn't supply them with.

POM. I wasn't aware we were out of anything. What was the article?

MARI. Cousin Rosine. Not a single purchase would they make because she wasn't here to serve them. Isn't it absurd?

POM. Absurd! On the contrary, I consider it flattering in the highest degree. Ever so many customers actually walk out of my shop with their money in their pockets because my daughter isn't here to wait upon them!—It's intensely gratifying. And so you would think, if you were a father—which you are not.

MARI. Of what use am I in the shop if I can't sell anything?

POM. Not much, certainly; but you're ornamental to a certain degree; you look well behind a counter—at a distance. I don't wish to flatter you; but you're not repulsive. Besides, it's no fault of yours that Rosine happens to put an extinguisher on you. If you'd been my daughter, instead of my niece, you'd probably have been as handsome as she is.

MARI. Well, if admiration can make a young woman happy, Rosine ought to be; she has a sweetheart for every day in the year.

POM. Yes, she has only to pick and choose—the whole town adores her—the young Count de Brissac in particular.

MARI. He's a charming, delightful young man!

POM. So he is—so he is; but we should prefer a marquis. Our original intention was not to let ourselves go under a duke; but we've come down a peg.

MARI. I suspect we shall have to come down a good

many pegs. I should have thought that if a mercer's daughter even condescended to marry a count, she'd have the best of the bargain.

POM. Nothing is too good for Rosine. She was actually the subject of conversation at court the other day. But, nevertheless, I must condescend to attend to business—not that there's much doing, for the Spaniards are in possession of nearly the whole country round. But I must be off; and if any more customers should come, detain them till Rosine makes her appearance. You can chat with them—or flirt with them.

MARI. Flirt with them! I like the idea.

POM. I thought you did, that's why I mentioned it. Here's my violin left out again. Some accident will happen to it; do put it away in the case.

MARI. No, uncle—it is left out for Monsieur Glissade. He is coming to give Rosine her lesson this morning.

POM. Well, take care it is not broken. *Exit, c. and R. H.*

MARI. So cousin Rosine has added another to the list of her victims—the Count de Brissac. There goes another of my admirers. This is the sixteenth time, at least, she's put my nose out of joint in the last three months. Oh, here comes the count.

Enter COUNT DE BRISSAC, c. from R., hurriedly.

Your servant, Monsieur de Brissac. (*making a very low curtsey.*) Your servant, Monsieur de Brissac. (*following DE BRISSAC, who looks hurriedly about the stage.*)

BRIS. (*not noticing her.*) Thank ye, my good woman.

MARI. His good woman!

BRIS. Just my luck! Whenever I come, there's sure to be nobody in the shop.

MARI. Nobody! Well, I rather flatter myself I'm somebody—at any rate, I'm not nobody.

BRIS. (R.) Of course you're not nobody. But how is it, Mariette, that I find you alone in the shop, eh?

MARI. (L.) Perhaps it's because nobody's with me: but never mind, I can serve you with anything you want. Shall I show you the last new fashion in ribbons, or lace, or gloves, or perfumes?

BRIS. No, no—I don't want any scents. (*impatiently.*)

MARI. (*aside.*) I'm not so sure of that.

BRIS. Tell me, my good Mariette, do you think that the flame which is consuming me is likely to meet its reward before I'm entirely burnt out? Does Rosine return my affection? Does she ever withdraw herself—within herself, as it were—and gazing intently upon nothing, as it were, exclaim in tremulous accents, “Oh! De Brissac?” or does she ever give way to a frantic flow of tears, or an insane paroxysm of laughter?

MARI. Yes; she was in convulsions of laughter yesterday morning, when your long sword got between your short legs and threw you down on your nose in the mud. You certainly did cut a very ridiculous figure—ha, ha!

BRIS. (*forcing a laugh.*) Ha, ha! But hark! her fairy footstep strikes upon my ear.

MARI. She's got her creaky shoes on. (*crosses R. H.*)

BRIS. My good Mariette, if you could suddenly remember that you've something very particular to do that would call you away to some other part of these extensive premises, you've no idea how much you would oblige me.

MARI. I understand. You want me to go.

BRIS. Oh dear, no—I only don't want you to stop. (*taking her hand and leading her towards L. side.*) It really grieves me to part with you; (*still leading her towards side.*) but if you will go, (*giving her a push.*) of course I can't help it. (*pushing her out and closing the L. H. door.*) She comes! the idol of my heart approaches! (*retires c.*)

Enter ROSINE, door R. 1 E.

ROSINE. How late I am this morning, to be sure! Half past nine o'clock, I declare! My dancing master, Monsieur Glissade, will be here directly, and I haven't practised my last lesson once. He'll be so angry. (*looking round, but not perceiving the COUNT.*) I see papa has left his violin. There's no one here to see me; why shouldn't I rehearse a little by myself? I will. Let me see; the first thing Monsieur Glissade does is to take his violin; (*COUNT takes the violin.*) he then makes me a very low bow,

(*imitating.*) which I return with a very gracious curtsey; (*curtseying.*) and telling me to turn out my toes, he strikes up a preparatory flourish, and the dancing lesson at once begins. (*putting herself in attitude—the COUNT giving a flourish on the violin; she turns and sees the COUNT.*) Monsieur le Comte! Oh, have you been here all the time?

BRIS. (L.) I have.

ROSINE. (R.) And you never said a word.

BRIS. I couldn't—I was speechless with admiration! The beauty of your person—the swan-like elegance of your attitude (*imitating.*) kept me dumb. But you were about to practise your dancing lesson. Let me be your dancing master—you doubt my ability?

ROSINE. No! But I'm afraid you won't be strict enough.

BRIS. I will—I will. (*aside.*) As this will probably be the only lesson I shall ever give her, she shall have enough of it—she shall dance till she drops. (*crosses to R. H.—aloud.*) Now then, begin.

(*a dancing lesson is then gone through by ROSINE, which ultimately becomes a pas de deux—the COUNT playing and dancing at the same time.*)

Bravo! bravissimo! (*banging the bow violently on the back of the violin.*) And now suppose we begin and do it all over again.

ROSINE. Not I, indeed.

BRIS. Oh, Rosine, why are you more insensible than this unhappy violin? Why don't you yield to the violence of my passion? When—when will you name the happy day that makes me yours—I mean makes you mine—I might say, makes us ours? Recollect, I've been dying for you for the last six weeks, and I really can't keep on dying much longer.

ROSINE. (L.) Monsieur de Brissac, you say you love me?

BRIS. (R.) I do—to a degree bordering on insanity.

ROSINE. Now listen to me. Although I'm only a mercer's daughter, I am not without ambition; consequently, I choose to put a certain value on myself.

BRIS. To do you justice, you do.

ROSINE. In the first place, then, I will marry no man who is not of noble birth.

BRIS. (*proudly.*) I am a De Brissac!

ROSINE. But that's not all. He must also be young, rich, and tolerably good looking.

BRIS. I am young, rich, and tolerably good looking! I may say *very* tolerably good looking!

ROSINE. But that's not all. I must have a splendid hotel in Paris—a noble chateau in the country—a profusion of beautiful diamonds—and a magnificent coach and six.

(*crossing to R. H.*)

BRIS. You shall have a coach and sixteen.

ROSINE. And above all, he must become my husband with the full approbation of his noble family!

BRIS. Of course! I've already got the consent of my two aunts and my grandmother, and that's all the family I have.

ROSINE. Indeed! I thought you had a father?

BRIS. Eh? Yes! by-the-bye, so I have! I quite forgot my father! Then, adorable Rosine, with these conditions fulfilled, you will be mine?

ROSINE. Why, Monsieur le Comte, I cannot, of course, but feel flattered by such proofs of your affection, but then, you see, there are so many other fine gentlemen—who say they adore me quite as much as you do.

BRIS. But, of course, you don't believe them—you can't be so utterly, so hopelessly insane as to believe them.

ROSINE. Why shouldn't I?

BRIS. (*vehemently.*) Why shouldn't you? Why shouldn't you? She says why shouldn't she! Oh, Rosine! Rosine! Why did fate and my friend the Marquis de Ligny ever bring me into your presence, by bringing me into your shop?

ROSINE. The Marquis de Ligny!

BRIS. Yes! You must have observed him!

ROSINE. (*aside.*) Heigho! I'm afraid I have. (*aloud.*) Oh, yes, I think I have seen him! a short, stout, elderly gentleman—isn't he?

BRIS. No, no! A remarkably fine man, a different style of beauty from mine! but nevertheless very handsome.

I once had the good fortune to save his life, and we've been bosom friends ever since.

ROSINE. (*with interest.*) You saved his life?

BRIS. Yes, from a watery grave! we were walking together one day, on the banks of the Garonne, when his foot suddenly slipped, and he was as suddenly precipitated into the torrent. "Can you swim?" said I. "No!" said he. "That's unlucky," said I. "Very!" said he. "Can you?" said he. "Yes," said I—and instantly plunged in after him, clothes and all; I seized my drowning friend by the hair of his head—unfortunately it came off in my hand.

ROSINE. His head?

BRIS. No! his wig! Nevertheless, I grappled with him again, when I was suddenly seized with the cramp, and should inevitably have gone to the bottom if the Marquis, who by that time had recovered his presence of mind, had not supported me in his arms, and brought me safe to land—and that was how I saved his life.

ROSINE. I should say that was how he saved *yours*. It was a noble, generous action, indeed!

BRIS. No—no! I only did my duty. But it wasn't to talk of the Marquis that I came here—but of you—of me—of us. I have written to my aged sire for his consent to our marriage, and I expect his answer this very day.

Enter POMARET, C. from L. with an open letter.

POM. (C.) And here it is.

BRIS. He consents—say he consents, and I'll embrace you! I'll embrace you several times.

POM. You shall judge for yourself—I will read your aged sire's letter, verbatim. (*reads.*) "Monsieur Pomaret, my son informs me that he is enamoured of your daughter, and earnestly solicits my consent to his marriage. How can I possibly object to a young lady of whom I know nothing."

BRIS. (L.) There's a sensible father for you.

POM. (*reading.*) "I therefore leave the matter entirely in your hands—merely observing, that if the marriage

should take place, you will inevitably spend the remainder of your days in the Bastile."

ROSINE. (R., *alarmed*.) The Bastile! Oh, how dreadful.

BRIS. Oh, dear, no! not at all! Besides, (*to POMARET*.) as you are evidently sinking rapidly into the grave, what can it possibly signify to you where you spend the brief remnant of your wretched existence! And then, think of the unspeakable satisfaction of sacrificing yourself for your daughter's happiness.

POM. (C.) True! I never thought of that. But you see, being a man of domestic habits, and not caring to extend my present geographical knowledge, I had just as leave stop where I am. Strange infatuation, isn't it? consequently, Monsieur le Comte, you will oblige me by instantly removing yourself from this domicile and never shewing your face here again.

ROSINE. (R.) My dear father! This is absurd.

BRIS. (L.) Of course its absurd! you barbarous old savage you must be joking. Renounce Rosine! never! Leave your shop? never! If I can't remain here as your daughter's lover, I'll stop here as your customer—Ha, ha! I've got you there! As a shopkeeper you can't refuse to serve me. (*takes a chair, and seats himself in the middle of the stage—POMARET goes behind counter*.) Therefore, worthy man, bring out everything you've got, and one at a time. I'm not in the slightest hurry! First, we'll begin with the glove department. (*ROSINE goes to the back of counter*.) My intention is to try on every pair you've got in the shop—that'll take about six weeks! Now then, you contemptible shopkeeper, are you going to keep a customer waiting all day? Where are your gloves? produce your gloves. (*violently*.)

POM. I'm out of gloves.

BRIS. Very well—then I'll stop here till you've got a fresh supply.

POM. No, no! I find I have got a few left. (*presenting a parcel of gloves to BRISSAC*.)

BRIS. (*turning over the gloves*.) These? Pooh! pooh! These won't do at all. (*tossing the gloves about on the stage*.) Now let me look at your ribbons. (*suddenly to POMARET*,

who is advancing.) Let me look at your ribbons. *(very violently.)*

POM. Oh, lud! Here, Rosine. *(handing box of ribbons to ROSINE.)*

ROSINE. *(shewing ribbons to BRISSAC.)* Here are some very beautiful patterns, Monsieur.

BRISSAC. *(assuming a patronising tone and manner.)* Thank you, friend Pomaret, you've got a very pretty daughter! takes after her mother I presume? I must trouble your delicate fingers to pin these various coloured ribbons to different parts of my dress, in order that I may judge of the effect.

(while ROSINE is pinning on the ribbons, BRISSAC kisses her hand repeatedly. POMARET tries to interfere, but gets his fingers pricked.)

POM. There—there! that'll do! very well! and now, perhaps, you'll— *(pointing to the door.)*

BRISSAC. Go? oh dear no! I haven't half done yet! I intend being stuck all over with ribbons from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet! ha, ha, ha! *(triumphantly.)* And what's more, I won't budge from your shop till I am! Ha, ha, ha! *(again laughing triumphantly.)*

POM. Oh! you won't, won't you? Very well! *(calling.)* Mariette! Mariette!

Enter MARIETTE, running, L. 1 E.

MARI. Yes, uncle!

POM. You'll be good enough to wait on this gentleman, and stick him over with ribbons from the crown of his feet to the soles of his head. *(crosses behind ROSINE—takes her arm under his.)* I'm much obliged for your custom, sir, I'm sure! the more money you spend, of course—the better for me! My daughter and I, sir, have the honour to wish you a very good morning! We shut up shop at four o'clock, sir, but if you shouldn't have completed your numerous purchases by that time you'll find Mariette here the first thing in the morning, and if you should be writing to your aged sire, perhaps you'll mention that I've taken his hint about the Bastile. My daughter and I, sir, once more have the honour to wish you a very good morning.

ROSINE. (*aside.*) Poor young man, he does look so very sheepish!

(POMARET takes ROSINE off, making a very low and obsequious bow to BRISSAC, door, R. 1 E.)

BRISS. (*kisses his hand to ROSINE, till she disappears.*) She's gone! perhaps for ever! (*goes L. H.*) And this is the work of the man who calls himself my father. (*walking to and fro.*)

MARI. (*who has been following him about, with a bunch of ribbons in one hand, and a paper of pins in the other.*) I beg your pardon, sir, but I've been trotting after you for the last five minutes, with a bunch of ribbons in one hand and a paper of pins in the other.

BRISS. (*wildly.*) Leave me!

MARI. But I was told to receive your orders!

BRISS. You have received them! leave me! (*still more wildly.*)

MARI. (*alarmed.*) Oh, lud! (*runs out hastily, door, L. H. 1 E.*)

BRISS. (*pathetically.*) Even she deserts me! I'm in that state of nervous irritation that I could quarrel with the best friend I have in the world!

(*during the above speech, the MARQUIS DE LIGNY has entered C., he is in the splendid costume of a Captain of Musketeers.*)

LIGNY. (*L. H. laying his hand on the COUNT's shoulder*) I am sorry to hear that, De Brissac, because the best friend you have in the world is myself, and I am not aware how I can have offended you.

BRISS. (*R. H., grasping his hand.*) My dear marquis, I'm delighted to see you! delighted beyond measure—so good bye.

LIGNY. (*laughing.*) "Delighted to see me" and "good bye" in the same breath. Where are you going in such a violent hurry?

BRISS. I haven't quite made up my mind, but the probability is that I shall amuse myself by climbing up to the very summit of something or other, and precipitating myself headlong into whatever happens to be below.

LIGNY. Why, what's the matter with you? you look the very concentrated picture of misery.

BRIS. (c.) Thank you—thank you! (*shaking DE LIGNY's hand.*) You can't delight me more than by telling me I am a wretched looking object.

LIGNY. Why, you ought to be about the happiest fellow in the world.

BRIS. And so I should be—unspeakably happy if I wasn't unutterably wretched.

LIGNY. But, why—why?

BRIS. Listen; and prepare for a dreadful shock! I love and am beloved.

LIGNY. Well, there's nothing very dreadful in that!

BRIS. No! the horrible part of it has got to come. (*grasping DE LIGNY's hand.*) They would tear us asunder.

LIGNY. They! who?

BRIS. Two flinty hearted fathers—mine and Rosine's!

LIGNY. Rosine? old Pomaret's daughter? the fair Rose of Amiens! is it she you love?

BRIS. Yes! What's to be done. (*hurriedly.*) Friend of my bosom, what's to be done?

LIGNY. Why as you can't conveniently get another father, suppose you try another mistress? Rosine is not the only woman in the world.

BRIS. Yes she is, in my eyes she constitutes the entire female sex—that's the melancholy part of it. Now confess! is there a more unhappy gentleman than I am in France!

LIGNY. Yes—I! at least, I might be if I chose. But you should look misfortune in the face, and laugh at it as I do. Ha, ha, ha!

BRIS. (*forcing a laugh.*) Ha, ha, ha! (*with a grimace.*) It's no use, I can't! But now I think of it you certainly haven't been in your usual spirits since you returned from your last visit to Paris.

LIGNY. (*hastily*) Enough—enough! De Brissac, I love you too well to desert you in a moment of difficulty; now tell me, and examine well your heart before you answer me—this love for the fair Rosine, is it not rather one of those ephemeral passions which exist to-day and are gone to-morrow?

BRIS. No—no—no! I feel I shall love her as long as I live, and a considerable time after.

LIGNY. And you have reason to believe that she loves you?

BRIS. To distraction! she adores the very ground I tread upon.

LIGNY. And you think that your father would consent to your marriage, if the lady, instead of being a simple mercer's daughter, were a baroness, or a countess?

BRIS. Or even a marchioness! my opinion is, that he wouldn't turn up his nose at a marchioness.

LIGNY. Then you shall marry her!

BRIS. Marry her?

LIGNY. I swear it!

BRIS. But, how—how?

LIGNY. That's my affair!

BRIS. But what's your plan?

LIGNY. That's no business of yours. (*shouting.*) What ho! within there!

BRIS. Well. but my very dear friend—

LIGNY. Hold your tongue! Within there, I say!

MARIETTE. (*without.*) Coming—coming! (*runs in, L. I. E.*) Beg pardon, for keeping you waiting, I'm sure!

LIGNY. Tell Monsieur Pomaret I require his presence here immediately.

MARI. Yes, sir. (*crosses R.*) Who shall I say sir?,

LIGNY. The Marquis de Ligny!

MARI. A marquis! oh, lud! Uncle Pomaret is very busy, sir, perhaps I could do as well. (*curtseying.*)

LIGNY. I repeat, I wish to see Monsieur Pomaret.

BRIS. (*aside to MARIETTE.*) And if you should see Rosine, tell her it's all right.

MARI. What's all right?

BRIS. Why, she's all right—I'm all right—we're all all right; go, go! (*pushes MARIETTE off at side door, R. H.*) Once more, my very dear friend, will you explain?

LIGNY. Once more, my equally dear friend, will you hold your tongue? I pledge you my honour that you shall marry Rosine, with your father's full consent. Does that satisfy you?

BRIS. Of course it does.

LIGNY. And you leave the matter entirely in my hands?

BRIS. Of course I do.

LIGNY. Then oblige me by going about your business.

BRIS. Couldn't I be present at the interview? I should so like to see how you're going to manage it.

LIGNY. Impossible! I must have a clear stage. So, as I said before, go. (*crosses, R.*)

BRIS. And when may I come back?

LIGNY. In a quarter of an hour.

BRIS. Couldn't you make it ten minutes? I'll go and take up a position in the market-place, and keep my eyes rivetted on the town clock. Noble, generous friend! farewell, for fifteen minutes. (*grasping and shaking DE LIGNY's hand—about to embrace him.*) No, I won't embrace you, because it will take up time. (*runs out, c. and R.*)

LIGNY. Yes, De Brissac, you shall find my friendship something more than a mere name. And, since the inexorable cardinal has pronounced my doom, and my fate is inevitable—

POMARET. (*without.*) A marquis, did you say? A real marquis?

Enter POMARET, R. H. D.

Your lordship's most obedient. (*seeing DE LIGNY—aside.*) The Marquis de Ligny, the Count de Brissac's most particular friend. I see—he has sent him here to try and coax me over about his marriage with Rosine, but I'm not going to get myself locked up in the Bastille to please anybody, not even a marquis.

LIGNY. Monsieur Pomarèt, may I request your attention to what I have to say?

POM. (*bowing.*) I am all ears. (*aside.*) He might just as well talk to a deafy.

LIGNY. You have a very charming daughter.

POM. Your lordship only echoes the universal opinion—but we're a handsome family.

LIGNY. Yes; I have heard that her mother was very lovely.

POM. (*aside.*) Rather a rude remark of the marquis.

LIGNY. But we are digressing. I presume the fair Rosine has not registered an oath against matrimony.

POM. (*aside.*) I knew what was coming.

LIGNY. And I equally presume, Monsieur Pomaret, that if a gentleman of birth and fortune were to solicit the honour of becoming your son-in-law, you would not be unwilling to accept him.

POM. (*aside.*) He's trying all he can to reconcile me to the Bastile, but it won't do. (*aloud.*) Certainly not, marquis, provided, I say, provided, the gentleman's father consented to receive Rosine as his daughter-in-law.

LIGNY. There can be no obstacle on that score, for the gentleman I allude to has no father.

POM. Goodness gracious! You don't mean to say he's defunct?

LIGNY. He was killed on the field of battle, twenty years ago.

POM. Go along! Why, I received a letter from him, half-an-hour ago.

LIGNY. A letter from my father?

POM. (*with a violent start.*) Your father! Gracious goodness! You don't mean—you can't mean to say that you are the gentleman who—

LIGNY. Yes, Monsieur Pomaret, I, Henri, Marquis de Ligny, Count of Neville, and Baron de Belleville, do hereby offer my hand in marriage to your daughter Rosine. Do you consent?

POM. Do I?—Don't I? Here's an honour! Rosine a marchioness! It's too much! Allow me to touch your hand—the extremest tips of your fingers! (*aside.*) Father-in-law to a marquis! Alive! all alive, oh!

LIGNY. Then you accept my proposal?

POM. I jump at it, marquis. Would you like to see me jump at it, marquis? I'll run and tell everybody!

LIGNY. One moment. There is a condition attached to this marriage.

POM. I consent to it, marquis. What is it, marquis?

LIGNY. That it takes place this very day—this very hour.

POM. Is that all, marquis? It shall take place this very minute, if you like. (*going.*)

LIGNY. Stay! There is one very important person in this business that we have entirely overlooked—your daughter! Will Rosine accept my hand?

POM. Will she? Won't she? Besides, marquis, if you'll

not let it go any farther, my belief is that she has long been secretly and ardently attached to you. (*aside.*) I don't believe she's ever seen him, but never mind that. (*calling.*) Rosine! Rosine! You're wanted in the shop! Rosine, I say!

Enter ROSINE, hastily, R. H. D., followed by MARIETTE.

ROSINE. Here I am, father; though it's rather hard I should be at the beck and call of every customer. (*pouting.*)

POM. Ah! but we don't get such a customer as this every day.

MARI. (*seeing DE LIGNY—aside to ROSINE.*) It's the Marquis de Ligny!

ROSINE. The Marquis de Ligny! Oh, monsieur!

(*making a very low curtsey to DE LIGNY.*)

LIGNY. Mademoiselle! (*making a low bow to ROSINE.*)

POM. Yes, my beloved daughter, you stand in the presence of the illustrious Marquis de Ligny, Count of Neville, and Baron de Belleville.

MARI. Three of them! Where are the other two?

(*looking about.*)

POM. The marquis and I have been talking about you, my child, and the result of our deliberation is, that you are to be married in three quarters of an hour!

ROSINE. Married! I!—in three quarters of an hour!

POM. Well, to give you ample time to prepare for this momentous epoch in your existence, we'll say an hour. I think we may give her an hour, marquis. Eh, marquis?

MARI. (*aside to ROSINE.*) Don't you see? The Count de Brissac has sent his friend, the marquis, here to plead his cause, and your father has relented. I wouldn't be married off hand in this sort of way.

ROSINE. Nor will I.

MARI. That's right—be a man!

ROSINE. I will. (*aloud, and looking at DE LIGNY.*) When I need advice as to the disposal of my hand, I will ask for it; until then I shall consider any interference in the matter as a very great liberty, from whatever quarter it may come. (*with strong intention.*)

MARI. (*aside.*) I should like to know how he feels after that!

LIGNY. (*to POMARET.*) Heyday! how's this? Fiends and furies, sir, you've been imposing on me.

POM. No—no—no! (*to ROSINE.*) But Rosine—Rosine—such a magnificent offer—you'll never get such another.

ROSINE. Perhaps not, but you may inform Monsieur de Brissac that my firm resolution is taken.

POM. Monsieur de Brissac! what's he to do with it? That for Monsieur de Brissac. (*snapping his fingers.*) It's my illustrious friend, the marquis himself, who does you the honour of "popping" to you.

ROSINE. The marquis! (*aside.*) Am I dreaming?

MARI. (*aside.*) There's luck! she no sooner snubs a count, than up turns a marquis.

LIGNY. (*coldly and respectfully to ROSINE.*) Yes, mademoiselle, and I did venture to hope that you would not reject my suit.

POM. Nor does she—she blushes—she looks down! (*aside to ROSINE.*) Why don't you blush and look down! you'll never be such a simpleton as to refuse him; besides, see how his manly bosom is swelling with agitation. (*aside to MARQUIS.*) could you conveniently allow your manly bosom to swell with agitation?

LIGNY. Time presses! the hour of my fate draws on. (*aloud.*) Your answer, mademoiselle.

ROSINE. (*very modestly to MARQUIS.*) Of course it's my duty to obey my honoured father in all things, and if he wishes that I should accept your hand—

POM. If? what do you mean by "if?" Of course your honoured father does! (*takes ROSINE's hand, then DE LIGNY's, and joins them.*) Bless you, my children—bless you; (*affecting to weep, and making a very wry face, then suddenly, with great glee.*) And now, hey for the lawyer and the marriage contract.

ROSINE. So soon?

LIGNY. It is absolutely necessary—indispensable!

POM. (R. c.) You're not going to object again.

ROSINE. No! it's my honoured father's wish!

POM. Of course it is! Tell all our friends and neighbours. Go! (*to MARIETTE, R., who is running off, c.*) Stop! Call in at the "Cardinal's Head," over the way, and order a sumptuous marriage feast—every possible

delicacy. (*aside to her.*) For which my noble son-in-law will pay. (*aloud.*) And, Mariette, secure the large room in the Town Hall for a magnificent ball to-night! (*aside.*) For which my noble son-in-law will also pay. (*aloud.*) And, Mariette, run round to all the churches—there are only five-and-twenty of them, and set the bells ringing—and, Mariette—that'll do!

MARI. What a pity you can't think of something else.

Exit c.

POM. Come, Rosine, we haven't time to prepare magnificent wedding dress fit for a marchioness, but pure white muslin will do—veils and wreaths we have plenty of! Salute your illustrious husband.

LIGNY. (*kisses ROSINE's hand, as she makes him a very low curtsy—aside.*) She's very lovely! Happy—happy De Brissac.

ROSINE. (*aside.*) Happy—happy Rosine!

(*she is led out by POMARET, door R. H., who again returns, and clasps the MARQUIS in his arms two or three times, and then trots out after ROSINE.*)

Enter DE BRISSAC, hastily, c. from R.

BRIS. (R.) Here I am, punctual to half a second! Well, my dear friend—well? don't keep me in suspense if you love me!

LIGNY. (R.—*very calmly.*) Everything is settled.

BRIS. Best of men come to my arms! But how did you manage it? You clever creature! how did you manage it?

LIGNY. Simply enough! I saw Monsieur Pomaret—made a formal proposal for his daughter's hand—he consented, and in an hour's time—

BRIS. (*triumphantly.*) I shall lead her to the altar.

LIGNY. No! I shall lead her to the altar.

BRIS. You! Oh, yes, I see! You'll lead her to the altar, and there I shall marry her.

LIGNY. You're wrong again. I shall marry her.

BRIS. I say, my dear friend, no nonsense! I'm not in a state to stand any nonsense.

LIGNY. I'm perfectly serious! In an hour's time Rosine will be my wife.

BRIS. Then, my beloved friend, you're an atrocious

humbug, after all! You promise me that I shall marry Rosine—

LIGNY. (*smiling.*) So you shall.

BRIS. (*indignantly.*) What! after you? Ha, ha, ha!

LIGNY. (*very quietly.*) Yes, after me.

BRIS. Well, of all the cool things I ever heard in my life! De Ligny, you're a traitor. (*violently.*)

LIGNY. Pshaw! I tell you once more, it's all right.

BRIS. All right! he tells me to go about my business for a quarter of an hour, which, like an ass, I do, proposes to the woman I adore, and then coolly says, "it's all right." (*in a state of desperation, and drawing his sword.*) Defend yourself. (*distant music without.*)

LIGNY. Pshaw! (*grasping De Brissac's arm, and leading him forward, then aside to him.*) De Brissac, you have torn from me a secret which, otherwise, would have perished with me! Listen, De Brissac to the words of a dying man, for in a few short hours—

Enter the MUSKETEERS, C.

we are interrupted—another time. (*crosses to L.*)

BRIS. No, no, no! Now, or never.

(*detaining DE LIGNY.*)

(*ALL surround DE LIGNY, and congratulate him—DE BRISSAC trying in vain to obtain a hearing—at this moment MARIETTE, Pomaret's FRIENDS and NEIGHBOURS, in holiday costumes, come hastily on, C., and POMARET himself appears, R. D., leading ROSINE in bridal attire—the women surround and congratulate ROSINE.*)

FEMALES. Long life, and much joy to you, dear Rosine.

POM. (*with great self-importance.*) Ahem! friends and neighbours, you are welcome! Permit me to present you my noble and illustrious son-in law, the Marquis de Ligny.

BRIS. (*who has advanced close behind POMARET.*) Never! (*in a voice of thunder.* POMARET hastily jumps aside.) I demand your daughter. She's mine! I love her—she loves me—so give her to me, you contemptible retailer of gloves and ribbons.

LIGNY. (*L. H., interfering.*) De Brissac!

BRIS. Avaunt! false, perfidious friend!

POM. (R. c.) My dear Count—

BRIS. Silence, you atrocious, mercenary old mercer.

LIGNY. Once more, De Brissac, I pledge you my honour—

BRIS. I know what you're going to say—you're going to tell me again that it's all right, but I happen to know it's all wrong! Rosine, I appeal to you!

ROSINE. (*aside.*) Poor young man! but as I said before, I must obey my father.

(*crosses to DE LIGNY, and gives him her hand.*)

BRIS. (*laughing hysterically.*) Ha, ha! deceived—betrayed by all! Never mind—I won't leave you! I'll stick to you both like your shadows—I'll follow you to church—to the very altar—I'll forbid the banns, and if the priest won't listen to me, I'll run him through the body—I'll run everybody through everybody's body.

LIGNY. (*aside.*) There's but one course to pursue. (*aloud.*) Monsieur de Brissac—your disrespect to me, your commanding officer, cannot, must not be overlooked! you will consider yourself under arrest till further orders. Gentlemen, away with him.

MUSKS. Come along—it's all right.

(*to DE BRISSAC, and taking him by the arms.*)

BRIS. (*struggling to free himself.*) All right—don't talk to me. Rosine—Rosine!

(*the MUSKETEERS seize and drag DE BRISSAC off, c., who is almost frantic with rage.*)

ROSINE. (*to MARQUIS.*) Oh, sir, have pity—

LIGNY. Fear not! in a few minutes he shall be restored to liberty, (*aside.*) and to happiness. (*aloud.*) Come! forward!

(*Music.—The MARQUIS leads ROSINE up the stage, followed by POMARET and his GUESTS.*)

END OF ACT THE FIRST

ACT II.

SCENE.—*An ante-room in the Town Hall of Amiens, illuminated. Window, c., with balcony; doors, R. and L. Lighted candelabras hanging on wall on each side of window, at c.*

Music—Enter POMARET, R. H. door.

POM. There never was such a ball seen in Amiens before—never! One hundred and twenty-six candles—all alight at the same time.—I counted them myself! And all in honour of my daughter, the marchioness. I can't repeat the words too often—my daughter, the marchioness! What a magnificent mouthful! Ah, she comes! Room there for the bride—room for “my daughter, the marchioness!”

ROSINE *enters in an elegant costume, followed by*
MARIETTE, R. H. door.

ROSINE. (*aside to POMARET, and anxiously.*) My dear father, is not this protracted absence of the marquis, my husband, most strange, most unaccountable? The marriage ceremony was scarce performed when he pleaded his military duties as a reason for his temporary absence; and now the ball is half over, and he has not yet made his appearance—

MARI. (R. H.) Surely he is not neglecting you already.

POM. (L. H.) No, no, no!

MARI. It looks uncommonly like it.

POM. *to* (MARIETTE.) Hold your tongue, if you please.

MARI. I presume I may be allowed to open my mouth?

POM. You may open it as wide as you like, provided you don't say anything.

ROSINE. I'll scold him so, when he does come. (*sits.*)

POM. Do—scold him so, by all means. But recollect, Rosine, the marquis is a soldier, and military routine must be attended to

ROSINE. Routine! What is that?

POM. Why, military routine is—'pon my life I don't exactly know what it is, nor anybody else. (*Music.*) But never mind, the ball is about to re-commence; and see

LADIES and GENTLEMEN enter door R. H.

here come our handsomest and gayest cavaliers, each anxious to secure for his partner my daughter, the marchioness—the queen of the revels. (*taking centre.*) Ahem! ladies and gentlemen, I have a communication to make which I will endeavour to convey in terms suitable to the solemnity of the occasion. (*great interest and curiosity on the part of the GUESTS.*) Supper's ready!

(*a general move is about to take place.*)

The MARQUIS enters, door L. H., hurriedly. All bow and curtsy to him.

LIGNY. (*taking ROSINE's hand and kissing it.*) A thousand pardons, dear Rosine, for so prolonged an absence; but it was forced upon me by a soldier's duty. (*aside.*) She is, indeed, lovely. (*turns to GUESTS.*) Friends, you are most welcome.

POM. Ahem! I again reiterate the interesting fact I mentioned just now—supper's ready.

(*the MARQUIS takes ROSINE's hand, and is about to lead her off.*)

At this moment DUMONT enters, door L. H., and making a military salute to the MARQUIS, places a paper in his hand.

DUMONT. (*in a rough tone.*) Paper.

LIGNY. From whom?

DUMONT. Don't know. (*goes up L. H.*)

LIGNY. (*opening and reading paper—aside.*) Ah! can it be possible? (*aloud.*) Monsieur Pomaret, lead your daughter to the banquet, I will follow you immediately.

ROSINE. (*pouting.*) Oh, pray don't hurry yourself, my lord, on my account—I beg!

LIGNY. Nay, Rosine, a most important despatch, I assure you, and one that requires immediate attention.

(POMARET takes ROSINE's hand—she looks appealingly at the MARQUIS as she is led out, R. All the GUESTS follow. MARIETTE is left without a cavalier.)

MARI. (*satirically.*) Of course! (*aside.*) This comes of marrying a nobleman. I only wish a marquis would propose to me. (*looking about her.*) Holloa! well, I'm sure! Is anybody going to lead me to supper? (*aloud, and looking significantly at the MARQUIS.*) Ahem!

LIGNY. A thousand pardons, young lady, but if you will accept a soldier's escort—

MARI. Oh, my lord! (*curtseying and simpering.*)

LIGNY. Enough! Dumont, take the lady's hand and lead her in. (DUMONT, *obedient to orders, seizes MARIETTE by the hand and deliberately walks out, dragging MARIETTE after him, R. H.—MARQUIS crushing the paper in his hands.*) S'dearth! could anything be more provoking, more unfortunate? De Brissac escaped! and at the very moment I was about to restore him to liberty. Where, where can he be?

(*the window is thrown open violently and DE BRISSAC appears.*)

BRIS. (R.) Where can he be? here—here! (*leaps in.*) And now, Marquis de Ligny, now that we are face to face, I charge you with falsehood and perjury, and demand instant satisfaction. (*draws.*)

LIGNY. Satisfaction! after all I have done for you.

BRIS. Done for me! Yes, you have *done* for me, with a vengeance! In a word, are you Rosine's husband or are you not?

LIGNY. (*quietly.*) I am.

BRIS. Then, as I said before, come on. (*flourishing his sword round his head violently.*)

LIGNY. My dear young friend, listen to what I have to say, and then if you are not satisfied I'll run you through the body with all the pleasure in life.

BRIS. Oh, you will, will you? Then I'll listen to you. (*sheathing his sword.*)

LIGNY. You already know that—

BRIS. Now, goodness gracious! don't tell me what I know already. You know I want to know what I don't know.

LIGNY. Patience! I repeat, that you already know that I recently obtained a few days' leave of absence.

BRIS. Yes, yes, yes—get on.

LIGNY. If you keep interrupting me in this sort of way, I shan't be able to get on at all. It was a task of considerable difficulty and danger to escape the Spaniards, but I succeeded, for I was animated by the hope of once more beholding the only woman I have ever loved.

BRIS. (*laughing hysterically.*) Ha, ha! that's delicious—the only woman you ever loved? And here you've married the only woman *I* ever loved. Well, of all the—never mind; get on—get on!

LIGNY. It was night ere I arrived at the chateau—ah, would that night had been my last!

BRIS. Would it had; but get on—get on!

LIGNY. De Brissac, I found her faithless—a more favoured lover knelt at her feet, and imprinted burning kisses on that hand that she had so often pledged to me. Maddened by rage and jealousy, I drew my sword and leaped into the apartment; the light was extinguished—a momentary clash of swords, and a cry as from a wounded man followed—and I rushed from the house. The next morning the news had spread far and wide that the Duke de Chavannes—for so my rival was called—had been basely, treacherously assassinated.

BRIS. Assassinated! No such thing—it was a duel.

LIGNY. A duel, De Brissac, without witnesses, and, as such, by the late edict of the Cardinal de Richelieu, punishable with degradation and death.

BRIS. Death! You were not suspected as the assassin—I mean the murderer—I should say the—

LIGNY. Nothing can escape the cardinal's emissaries. Three days ago I received this letter from his eminence. (*reads.*) "The Duke de Chavannes died by your hand—your life is forfeited and you must die; but I will spare you the infamy of a public execution. The king is not unmindful of your services, and you are therefore graciously permitted to seek an honourable death. The Spaniards are now besieging Amiens; within three days let me hear that the Marquis de Ligny has preferred a soldier's death on the battle field to that of a felon on the scaffold."

BRIS. Oh, my poor friend, how very dreadful! Never mind—get on!

LIGNY. In two hours the three days will have expired, and I shall have ceased to live.

BRIS. Don't talk in that horrible way, don't. Ah! (*suddenly.*) I begin to have some faint glimmering of your meaning; yes, I see it all—your motive for making Rosine your wife—

LIGNY. Was simply to fulfil my promise to you, that you should marry her. In two short hours she will be my widow.

BRIS. How delightful—I mean how dreadful! Get on.

LIGNY. No longer Rosine, the simple mercer's daughter, and, as such, scorned and rejected by your proud father, but the wealthy and noble Marchioness de Ligny. Now, say, De Brissac, am I the traitor—am I the false, perfidious friend?

BRIS. Don't—don't—don't! Oh, my poor, dear friend—generous but unhappy being! I'm so happy, and yet so miserable. I've recovered the woman I've just lost, and I'm going to lose the friend I've just recovered. I can't cry for laughing, and I can't laugh for crying—noble, self-sacrificing man! (*blubbing.*) It's too much!—(*suddenly.*) Don't die—live and be happy, and I'll try and fall in love with somebody else.

LIGNY. Nay, my fate is sealed—I must die.

BRIS. Must you? Forgive the apparent brutality of the question, but how do you intend getting rid of yourself?

LIGNY. How? Are there not sixty thousand Spaniards without the walls of Amiens.

BRIS. (*in an agony.*) Don't.

LIGNY. And after all what is death? 'Tis but a journey which we all must take.

Enter DUMONT, L. H. door.

LIGNY. Well, Dumont, what is it?

DUMONT. You're wanted.

LIGNY. Indeed! By whom?

DUMONT. A messenger from the Cardinal de Richelieu.

LIGNY. (*to DE BRISSAC.*) To remind me, doubtless, that my last hour is at hand.

BRIS. Don't. (*shuddering.*)

LIGNY. Well, he shall bear back the tidings to his

eminence that the Marquis de Ligny has died like a gentleman, and a soldier.

BRIS. Don't!—

LIGNY. Dumont.

DUMONT. Here!

LIGNY. Mount your horse instantly, and ride to the Spanish Camp with a flag of truce, you will there deliver this message. "That the Marquis de Ligny, captain of the King's Musketeers, will, within this hour, capture the Spanish standard, which now flaunts so proudly over the tent of their general.

BRIS. Well, but this is rushing to certain death.

LIGNY. I know it! But the Cardinal's scaffold, De Brissac, is equally certain, and thus I shall at least die with honour. Dumont, you'll obey my orders.

DUMONT. (*dashing his hand across his eyes.*) I will.

LIGNY. Be sure you go alone, and that not a living soul knows of your errand. Away!

(*DUMONT hesitates for a moment, then suddenly grasps MARQUIS'S hand, wrings it fervently, and goes out, L.*)

You are now satisfied, De Brissac, that there can be no escape for me, and consequently no impediment to your marriage with Rosine.

BRIS. Your business does appear to be settled, my poor dear friend, and I shall have the melancholy satisfaction of marrying your widow—horrible happiness.

The MESSENGER from the Cardinal enters, door, L. H.

MESSENGER. Is it to the Marquis de Ligny that I have the honour to address myself?

LIGNY. It is, sir.

MESSENGER. I come, sir, from—

LIGNY. The Cardinal de Richelieu—I am aware of it, sir. His eminence seems to fear that I should forget the conditions on which his clemency was shown to me.

MESSENGER. You mistake the nature of my mission, Marquis.

(*gives letter, bows, and exit, L. H.*)

LIGNY. (*opening letter.*) "Among the papers of the late Duke de Chavannes, were found indisputable proofs of his being the originator of a treasonable correspondence with the Spanish general to deliver the town of Amiens into his hands."

BRIS. Well, well—

LIGNY. (*reads.*) “As your good sword, my Lord Marquis, took this vile traitor’s life the king grants you a full pardon.” (*takes stage, L. H.*)

BRIS. A pardon! Oh, my dear friend! (*shaking his hand.*) I’m so happy—I’m so delighted—Tol de rol. (*dancing—then suddenly stops.*) Holloa! Stop a bit. I say my dear friend—

LIGNY. Well.

BRIS. This won’t do at all! You’ve married my wife, on the express condition of getting yourself killed within an hour—

LIGNY. Very true, my dear friend, but in the mean time, I unexpectedly receive my pardon. I can’t help the Cardinal taking a merciful view of my case, can I?

BRIS. Pooh, pooh! Nonsense! You became Rosine’s husband in order that she might be my wife, consequently I consider her to be my wife.

LIGNY. Hush! she comes! Leave us.

BRIS. Leave you! Ha, ha! Leave you alone with my wife—I mean your wife—I should say, our wife! No, no! Here I am and here I’ll stop.

LIGNY. But see, her father, Monsieur Pomaret, is with her; recollect, he has forbidden you the house.

BRIS. Eh? that’s true! I have it, yes—I’ll step out on that balcony, in order that I may hear what you say to my wife, sir.

LIGNY. My wife! sir!

BRIS. Our wife, sir.

LIGNY. A capital idea! Go—make haste. (*pushing him towards window.*) Make haste, I say. (*BRISSAC goes to window, and steps out on balcony.*)

BRIS. But remember, sir. (*solemnly.*)

LIGNY. Yes, exactly! (*slams window in his face.*)

BRIS. (*re-opening window.*) I repeat, remember, sir.

(*the MARQUIS closes the window in his face again.*)

Enter ROSINE, MARIETTE, and POMARET, R.

POM. (*as he enters.*) But, Rosine, consider, I repeat, consider—

ROSINE. Nay, father—I must and will speak.

MARI. (*aside to her.*) That's right! Do, and don't spare him.

ROSINE. (*to MARQUIS.*) This business must be most important, indeed! my lord marquis, that you cannot devote even a few moments to the society of your guests—and your bride.

MARI. (*aside to her.*) That was severe. (*to POMARET.*) Why don't you say something?

LIGNY. (*to ROSINE.*) I assure you that I really—(*aside.*) What the deuce shall I say? (*aloud.*) A thousand pardons—let us rejoin our guests.

ROSINE. Indeed! And so escape the scolding I have in store for you, sir! No, no! We will follow you immediately, my dear father.

POM. (*to MARQUIS.*) When she says "scolding," she only means a little—gentle—or rather—mild, indeed, I might say—

MARI. Uncle, you're getting out of your depth.

POM. I am. Hey day! thunder, I declare. I'll close the shutters. (*thunder.*)

LIGNY. Yes, yes! a very good idea, close the shutters by all means. (*POMARET closes the shutters.*)

POM. Come, Mariette! we're going to have a storm.

Exeunt, with MARIETTE, door R. H.

LIGNY. (*aside, and looking towards window.*) I think it very likely!—I can't conceive a much more awkward situation! Rosine evidently resolved on an explanation, and that confounded De Brissac on the balcony. This will be a lesson to me, never to marry a woman on another man's account again. I really don't know that I ever saw a prettier, or more interesting creature than my—I mean *our* wife.

ROSINE. I think you said something?

LIGNY. Ahem! I merely was about to observe (*thunder.*) that it seems—rather—a rather rough sort of night.

ROSINE. Very, Marquis! (*aside.*) Just as if I cared about the weather. (*sudden and violent wind and rain heard.*)

LIGNY. (*aside.*) Pleasant for my friend on the balcony! I should say a drowned rat would be a joke to him. He'll be knocking to come in, presently. (*aloud.*) But

really we mustn't forget our excellent friends are awaiting us—will you allow me? (*offers his hand.*)

ROSINE, (*very drily.*) One moment, my lord! Some little explanation is necessary.

LIGNY. (*aside.*) Now for it! I knew it was coming.

ROSINE. In a word then (*a loud knocking at the window.*) What's that?

LIGNY. No—thing! only the wind. (*aside.*) The shutters are fastened, so he can't get in, that's one comfort. (*to ROSINE.*) You were about to observe?—

ROSINE. This, Marquis, that your neglect of the woman, who, however inferior to yourself in position, is now your wife, is so obvious, so palpable, so marked—

(*endeavouring to restrain her tears, and at length overcome by her emotion, bursts into tears.*)

LIGNY. Rosine! Rosine! (*snatches her hand—the knocking and shaking at the window is resumed with redoubled force—rain—he hastily lets go her hand.*)

ROSINE. (*alarmed.*) That noise again! What—what—is it?

LIGNY. No—thing! it's only the rain. (*aside.*) Confound the fellow.

ROSINE. Oh, sir, be sincere, be honest with me, tell but how I may gain my husband's esteem, his confidence, his affection, and believe me I will earnestly, eagerly, try to deserve it.

LIGNY. (*aside.*) She's an angel! I repeat our wife is an angel. (*aloud.*) Rosine! dear, dear Rosine!

(*taking her hand again, the knocking and shaking of the window resumed more violently than ever; rain and thunder.—the MARQUIS again lets go her hand.*)

ROSINE. Again! I really feel quite alarmed. (*trembling and approaching the MARQUIS, who retreats.*)

LIGNY. There's nothing to fear! It's only the thunder. (*here a violent clap of thunder takes place, the window is again violently shaken.*)

ROSINE. Ah! (*screaming.*) Save me!

(*throws herself into his arms. At this moment the window is burst open with a violent crash and DE BRISSAC, soaked with wet leaps into the apartment. The sudden opening of the window extinguishes the candelabras hung on the flats. The stage is quite*

dark. At the sound of the broken window, ROSINE again screams, and hides her face in her hands.

BRIS. I haven't a dry thread on me. But where are they? I don't hear them—and yet they must be here.

(groping his way about towards the front.)

ROSINE. *(suddenly looking up.)* Oh, surely you do not mean to leave me here alone.

LIGNY. *(stopping.)* No!

BRIS. No!

ROSINE. Why, I do declare there's an echo in the room. *(the MARQUIS and DE BRISSAC approach ROSINE, carefully feeling their way; at last each takes hold of ROSINE's hands, upon which they each deposit a loud-sounding kiss—the MARQUIS first, and then BRISSAC.)* Mercy on me! there's another echo! *(then, conscious that she is in the hands of two men.)* Ah, help—help! *(struggling to free herself.)*

POMARET, MARIETTE, and GUESTS enter hastily, R. Stage light.—ROSINE, seeing her position, frees herself. The GUESTS all speak to each other, and express their astonishment; they speak in whispers, shrugging their shoulders, &c.

POM. *(seeing DE BRISSAC.)* What do I see? the count here—and kissing the hand of my daughter, the marchioness! What business have you here, sir? You hear, sir?—here, sir?

ROSINE. Nay, father, it is to me that an explanation is due. *(crosses to R. C.)*

POM. *(excited.)* If somebody doesn't hold me tight I shall do something desperate.

ROSINE. *(quietly to MARQUIS.)* I will return soon, my lord, in the certain assurance that the explanation I shall receive from my husband's lips will leave me no ground to blush that I bear his name. *(curtseys low to MARQUIS.)* Friends, follow me. *Exit, R. H.*

POM. You hear, sir! *(not aware that ROSINE and MARIETTE have gone out.)*

LIGNY. *(impatiently.)* Pshaw!

POM. What's that, sir?

LIGNY. *(turning sharply round to POMARET, who retreats.)* Hark'ye, Monsieur Pomaret—I should exceedingly regret that the first act of my married life should be to run my father-in-law through the body; but—

POM. That's enough, sir—I accept your apology, and wish you a very good evening!

Exit, R.—the GUESTS retire with him—the MARQUIS and DE BRISSAC turn and look at each other face to face.

LIGNY. Well?

BRIS. Well?

LIGNY. A pretty scene of mischief and scandal you have occasioned. We shall be the whole talk of the town. Rosine will believe that your presence here was sanctioned by me, and that I was a consenting party to an insult offered to my wife.

BRIS. *My* wife, if you please! Yes; you promised that I should marry her, and that promise you must fulfil.

LIGNY. But how—how?

BRIS. Get a divorce, and then you won't be condemned to pass the remainder of your existence with a woman you don't care about; for you don't care about her, do you?

LIGNY. Ah, De Brissac, if you fell a victim to her charms, how should I hope to escape? I confess her beauty has captivated, fascinated me.

BRIS. Gracious goodness, you don't mean to say you love my wife?

LIGNY. Be calm!

BRIS. Calm! ha, ha! He's got my wife in his pocket—I mean in his power; he's married Rosine—he says he loves her—and he tells me to be calm. (*crosses R. H.*)

Enter DUMONT, L. H.

LIGNY. (C.) Who is there?

DUMONT. (L.) I, captain!

LIGNY. Dumont! (*as if suddenly struck by a painful recollection—aside.*) I had forgotten. (*aloud.*) You have carried my defiance to the Spanish camp?

DUMONT. Yes, and delivered it to the general himself.

LIGNY. (*aside.*) It was the desperate resolve of a man who believed himself inevitably doomed to an ignominious death—my pardon has arrived too late. (*aloud.*) Enough.

DUMONT. No, there is something more, captain, that must be told. “Inform the Marquis de Ligny,” said the Spanish general, “that I have received his message, which if he fails to execute within the hour”—and it's almost

gone, captain—" I shall not consider it the chivalrous challenge of a gallant soldier, but the insolent bravado of a coward !"

LIGNY. A coward ! Dumont, within five minutes, let me find my horse ready—my favourite charger, Dumont, and see that the noble animal is proudly caparisoned, for he bears his master to a glorious death.

BRIS. (R. H.—*pathetically*.) I wish you wouldn't !

DUMONT. What arms, captain ?

LIGNY. My good sword here. (*touching the scabbard*.) Now, Dumont, away ! *Exit DUMONT, door L. H.*
De Brissac, (*holding out his hand—DE BRISSAC grasps it*.) you'll not deny a dying man one favour ?

BRIS. But you're not a dying man, You've received your pardon Send word to the whole Spanish camp you can't come—I should.

LIGNY. And be branded as a braggart and a coward ? No, De Brissac ; I dread dishonour more than death. And, now, farewell, my friend—my last request is that you will justify me with Rosine.

BRIS. I will. I'll tell her you only married her in order that she might marry me ; she won't perhaps exactly understand it ; but never mind that.

LIGNY. (*sitting at table, R. H.*) Stay ! I will write a few words to her.

BRIS. I shall always be seeing him in my dreams, in mortal conflict with the entire Spanish army. (*crosses, L. H.*) Oh, live, my dear friend—live, and I'll try and fall in love with some other woman.

LIGNY. (*rising and giving paper to DE BRISSAC*.) There ! give it her when I'm dead.

BRIS. Don't ! (*go up, L. H.*)

Enter ROSINE, R.

ROSINE. (*aside*.) Still together !

LIGNY. Rosine !

ROSINE. (*with cold reserve*) My lord marquis I seek that explanation which you must feel is due to me.

LIGNY. Rosine !

ROSINE. I require no idle protestations—I ask but a few moments of your leisure.

LIGNY. I am at your orders, madame !

BRIS. (R. H.) Speak, dear Rosine! (*very tenderly.*)

ROSINE. Sir! (*drawing herself up.*) The words I have to say must be spoken to my husband alone. (*goes up.*)

BRIS. Oh! (*aside.*) That's a sufficiently intelligible hint for me—(*pointing to door.*)

LIGNY. Leave us!

Exit DE BRISSAC, R.

ROSINE. (L. H.) My lord, I shall not long tax your patience—I do not come to remind you of the vows you so lately uttered at the altar, neither do I come to demand reparation for the insult offered to your wife by the Count de Brissac, for I am well aware that his presence here was not the result of accident; no, my lord, it was sanctioned by you—yes, by you, my lord marquis; who were a participator in that shameful outrage from which it was your duty to protect me.

LIGNY. I? Nay, Rosine, I swear—

ROSINE. Do not, by the denial of this fact, sully the honour of a name already sufficiently humbled by your union with the poor mercer's daughter.

LIGNY. Hear me!

ROSINE. Hear *me*, my lord! My father is now with the Cardinal de Richelieu, and in compliance with my earnest wishes, is soliciting his eminence to annul our unhappy union.

LIGNY. Indeed? madame! you might have spared yourself the humiliation of such a step—for you will soon be free—ay, madame, free to wed the only man you ever truly loved.

ROSINE. So you believed I loved the Count de Brissac, but that, dazzled by your superior rank wealth, I married *you*. Oh, sir! I did not, could not believe you thought so meanly of me.

LIGNY. Can I be mistaken? Rosine! dear Rosine! has De Brissac, then, deceived himself and me? have you never loved him?

ROSINE. Never! I gave my heart where I gave my hand.

LIGNY. (*seizing her hand and kissing it passionately.*) You love me! Oh, speak, Rosine, do not crush the hope that you have raised, for I love you, Rosine, dearly, devotedly love you.

ROSINE. Ah! (*throwing herself into his arms.*) *Enter DUMONT, door, L. H.* LIGNY, seeing DUMONT, starts—dis-

engages himself from ROSINE's arms and puts her across to R. H.

DUMONT. All is ready, captain,

LIGNY. (*with intention.*) For the inspection!

DUMONT. No—yes—of course—for the inspection.

ROSINE. Must you leave me again?

LIGNY. (*smiling bitterly, and controlling his emotion.*) Yes, Rosine, but believe me I leave you now for the last time.

ROSINE. (*playfully.*) You're sure of that?

LIGNY. Quite, quite sure. Farewell.

(*assuming a forced cheerfulness, and kissing her hand; goes up stage, stops, returns, clasps her in his arms, and hurries out, followed by DUMONT, door L. H.*)

ROSINE. He loves me! Happy, happy Rosine! (*runs to balcony and looks out.*) How he hurried away. Well, I think he might have looked up at the balcony for the chance of seeing me. How he does gallop to be sure!

Enter MARIETTE, hurriedly, door R. H.

MARI. Rosine—Rosine!

ROSINE. (*coming forward.*) Well, what's the matter?

MARI. I don't know, but there's something extraordinary going on. Where's the marquis?

ROSINE. He's just left me.

MARI. Gone again! The man doesn't seem able to stop in the same place five minutes together; then there's Monsieur de Brissac—what's the matter with him? There he is rushing about the corridors, tearing his hair—banging his head with both his hands, and raving about killing sixty thousand Spaniards and marrying their widows.

ROSINE. Poor young man! I'm afraid his love for me has turned his brain.

MARI. Not a bit of it; for just now he flopped down on both his knees to me, and asked me to marry him. "Be mine," said he; "say yes," said he, "and you'll preserve the marquis—you'll preserve the whole Spanish army." But here he comes.

Enter DE BRISSAC, hurriedly, pale and agitated, R. H.

BRIS. (*crosses L. H.*) Not here! Where is he—the marquis—my friend, my wretched, unhappy friend?

ROSINE. (R. H.) Not so very wretched or unhappy, either, I flatter myself.

BRIS. Where, where is he?

ROSINE. He has just left me.

BRIS. Gone! (*sinks on sofa, L. H.*)

ROSINE. Yes, on some trifling military duty.

BRIS. Trifling! (*aside.*) Fighting the entire Spanish army!

ROSINE. But he promised me he would soon return.

BRIS. Did he? ha, ha, ha? (*laughing hysterically.*)

ROSINE. But you are pale—agitated?

BRIS. Am I? ha, ha! (*starting up and grasping her hand.*) Rosine, how are your nerves? is your system in a condition to bear a terrific shock?

ROSINE. What do you mean?

BRIS. Mean? why this—that the miserable marquis is at this very moment engaged in deadly conflict.

ROSINE. Ah! and who is his antagonist? Speak—speak! who is he?

BRIS. Who is *he*? Sixty thousand of them—the entire Spanish Army; but read this. (*gives note.*) It must be all over with him by this time.

ROSINE. (*glancing over note.*) Ah, no, no—it cannot be—(*reading again.*) Dead! (*sinks into chair, R. H.*)

MARI. Dead! (*screams and falls on sofa, L. H.*)

BRIS. (*running from one to the other.*) Rosine, dear Rosine! don't take on so! Mariette! don't be absurd! (*taking her hand, and slapping it violently—then running again to ROSINE.*) It's very dreadful; but, after all, you can't care so very much about him.

ROSINE. (*passionately.*) I loved him!

BRIS. You loved him—ha, ha! (*sinks on sofa, embracing and hugging MARIETTE wildly.*)

ROSINE. I loved him—how dearly, how devotedly, he will never—never know. (*Drums, trumpets, and shouts, L.*)

Enter DE LIGNY, door R. H.

LIGNY. Rosine!

(ROSINE screams and rushes into his arms.)

BRIS. (*jumping off sofa.*) He's killed the whole sixty thousand! I thought he would.

LIGNY. My dear friend, believe me I did all I could to get myself killed.

BRIS. But you didn't succeed? Just my luck.

LIGNY. Nay, you love your friend too well not to rejoice to see him alive again.

BRIS. You're right; but the entire Spanish army must have been a sad set of bunglers for all that.

LIGNY. Nay, for when I had arrived within a few paces of their camp, I discovered that my brave companions had followed me—Dumont had turned traitor, and revealed to them the nature of my desperate errand.

POMARET. (*without door, R. H.*) Where is Rosine—where is she? (*Enters, followed by GUESTS.*) Long live the cardinal! his eminence for ever! It's all right, Rosine! In a word, your marriage with the Marquis de Ligny is dissolved.

ALL. Dissolved!

BRIS. (*snatching paper from POMARET and reading.*) Dissolved! Yes, "provided parties are mutually agreed to separate." (*tears paper.*)

POM. Holloa! halloa! why have you destroyed that paper?

BRIS. Because *both* parties are mutually agreed to live together. (*pointing to DE LIGNY and ROSINE.*)

POM. Then I may still call myself father-in-law to a marquis?

BRIS. Yes, and if Mariette has no objection, uncle-in-law to a count. (*offering his hand to MARIETTE.*)

MARI. (L.) A countess! Oh, Rosine, think of that!

ROSINE. (R.) A marchioness! Oh, Mariette, think of that!

BRIS. Rosine, I give you joy; and, marquis, I'll never forgive you if you don't make *our* wife—I mean my wife—psbaw! your wife—the happiest woman in the world.

POM. Very well. Then, for the future, let there be an end of *Our Wife*.

ROSINE. (*crosses to POMARET.*) Nay, father, I hope not. (*to AUDIENCE.*)

This "house" alone the weighty question can decide, Whether the title to our bill be laid aside.

Oh, let me rather *move*—the term, I think, is right—That it be read again another night.

R. MARQUIS. ROSINE. POMARET. BRISSAC. MARIETTE. L.



